

Dear Chairman DeFronzo, Chairman Guerrero, Ranking Member Boucher, and Ranking Member Scribner and other distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement in support of Testimony of SB 434 B - *AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF LAND ORIGINALLY ACQUIRED FOR THE "SUPER 7" HIGHWAY.*

The issue of Super 7 Highway from Norwalk to the Danbury line is a 50 year-old controversy that has been shelved by the state at this time for the following reasons:

1. 40% of the land needed for the construction of the highway is not currently owned by the state and would need to be acquired before any movement could take place - a highly unfeasible and impractical expense.
2. The DOT-owned land contains one of the largest wetlands in our state. Wetlands are essential ecosystems that support a wide variety of wildlife and plantlife. They also are crucial for water quality and flood control. Thus, it is vital to protect such lands.
3. Federal environment impact statement is required, and most feel that it would never be received in the affirmative.
4. The cost of building a 20 mile-long and 100 foot high fly-over highway would be grossly unaffordable given new national roadway engineering requirements.
5. Environmental group and local town opposition including Ridgefield, Redding, Wilton and parts of many surrounding towns would keep it in the courts for decades.

It would therefore make sense to give our State DOT more flexibility in the use or disposition of this land which has been restricted so many years ago. I urge enabling language to Section 1. Section 13a-85b of the general statute that: *DOT may sell or transfer the land for non-development purposes, primarily open space preservation.*

Thank you for your most careful consideration of my statement.
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